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# Message Text

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14
ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 FEA-01 ACDA-05 AGR-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00

CIEP-01 OFA-01 COME-00 DLOS-04 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01

ERDA-05 FMC-01 TRSE-00 INT-05 JUSE-00 NSF-01 OES-03

OMB-01 SAL-01 ITC-01 STR-04 /119 W
---------- 081647
R 011025Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4689
USUN NY NY 288

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0978

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, PFOR, US
SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

REF: STATE 037591

1. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY'S REPLIES TO QUESTIONS
PARA 7 REFTEL.

(A) PROBABLY SINGAPORE'S GREATEST MULTILATERAL OBJECTIVE
IN 1976 IS TO INSURE THAT THE LOS CONFERENCE ADOPTS
SATISFACTORY PROVISIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE TRANSIT OF
INTERNATIONAL STRAITS. SINGAPORE'S POSITION ON THIS
ISSUE IS VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL WITH THE U.S. POSITION.
AS A MEMBER OF ASEAN, SINGAPORE'S PRIMARY REGIONAL
MULTILATERAL INTEREST IS TO PERSUADE OTHER ASEAN
GOVERNMENTS TO REACH CONCRETE ARRANGEMENTS TO PROMOTE
JOINT INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS AND CONCLUDE SPECIFIC
AGREEMENTS TO REDUCE TARIFFS. FINALLY, SINGAPORE
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WILL MANEUVER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO AVOID TAKING

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FIRM POSITIONS ON DIFFICULT POLITICAL QUESTIONS WHICH
WOULD PLACE IT EITHER AT ODDS WITH THE U.S. OR THE
GROUP OF 77. GOS DOES NOT WISH TO JEOPARDIZE
ITS NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS. EMBASSY
KNOWS OF NO SPECIFIC INITIATIVES WHICH
THE GOS PLANS TO TAKE IN MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS
OTHER THAN ASEAN. THE ONLY MEMBERSHIP THE GOS IS SEEKING
IN 1976 IS ELECTION TO ECOSOC. THE GOS NORMALLY DOES NOT
COMPETE FOR MEMBERSHIPS IN SUCH BODIES, BUT FEELS OBLIGED
THIS YEAR TO SEEK ELECTION TO ECOSOC SINCE IT IS THE
ONLY ASEAN MEMBER NOT TO HAVE SERVED IN THIS ORGANIZATION.

B. THE OTHER ASEAN GOVERNMENTS, ESPECIALLY INDONESIA,
NORMALLY HAVE THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON GOS POLICY-
MAKING. IN TURN, THE GOS TRIES TO INFLUENCE ITS ASEAN
COLLEAGUES TO SUPPORT POSITIONS IT CONSIDERS REALISTIC.
THE GOS HAS OCCASIONALLY BROKEN RANKS WITH ITS ASEAN
COLLEAGUES, E.G. THE TIMOR ISSUE, BUT ONLY WITH THE
GREATEST RELUCTANCE. IN VIEW OF ITS PROFESSED NON-
ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY AND AS A MEMBER OF THE GROUP
OF 77, THE GOS PREFERS TO GO ALONG WITH THE CONSENSUS
OF THIS BODY. HOWEVER, AS ONE OF THE MORE MODERATE
GOVERNMENTS IN THIS GROUP, IT CAN USUALLY BE COUNTED ON TO
SUPPORT PROPOSALS TO MODERATE SOME OF THE EXTREME LANGUAGE
PROPOSED BY THE MORE RADICAL MEMBERS. IN CERTAIN CASES WHERE
IT BELIEVES IT HAS A SUFFICIENT INTEREST IN THE OUTCOME, ES-
PECIALLY IN LOS MATTERS, THE GOS WILL BE PREPARED TO TAKE THE
INITIATIVE OR ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE INITIATIVES OF OTHERS.
FOR EXAMPLE, IN RECENT YEARS IT HAS ACTIVELY SUPPORTED THE E-
FFORTS OF THE GROUP OF LANDLOCKED, SHELF-LOCKED AND GEOGRAPHI-
CALLY DISADVANTAGED COUNTRIES TO MODIFY CERTAIN POSITIONS TAKEN
BY SOME OF THE MORE RADICAL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP OF 77.

C. MFA PROVIDES GENERAL, BROAD GUIDELINES TO ITS UN
REPRESENTATIVE AND TO ITS DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCES. ON MATTERS OF MINOR IMPORTANCE AND OF LITTLE IN-
TEREST TO SINGAPORE, MFA WILL GENERALLY GIVE ITS
AMBASSADOR IN NEW YORK OR ITS DELEGATION TO INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCES SUFFICIENT DISCRETION AND AUTHORITY TO DECIDE MATTERS
WITHOUT REFERENCE TO MFA. HOWEVER, ON MAJOR INTERNATIONAL
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ISSUES AT THE UN OR QUESTIONS OF IMPORTANCE TO SINGAPORE,
MFA DOES EXERT EFFECTIVE CONTROL WHILE MEETINGS ARE IN PROGRESS.
MAJOR POLITICAL QUESTIONS, SUCH AS THE VOTE ON THE KOREAN ISSUE,
WILL BE DECIDED IN CABINET WITH PRIME MINISTER'S OPINION USUALLY
BEING THE DECISIVE FACTOR. ON FAST-MOVING QUESTIONS, SINGAPORE'S
AMBASSADOR TO THE UN WILL OCCASIONALLY CALL MFA ON THE TELE-
PHONE TO SEEK INSTRUCTIONS. PRESUMABLY, THIS ALSO HAPPENS AT
OTHER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. TO THE EXTENT WE CAN DETERMINE,

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SINGAPORE DELEGATIONS' REPORTING IS SUFFICIENT TO MAKE INSTRUCTIONS FROM MFA TIMELY AND REALISTIC. HOWEVER, ON ISSUES WHICH ARE OF LITTLE INTEREST TO SINGAPORE OR SEEM RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT TO THE SINGAPORE DELEGATION WE HAVE OCCASIONALLY FOUND MFA TO BE INADEQUATELY INFORMED.

D. NO. GOS REPRESENTATIVES ARE HIGHLY CONSCIOUS THAT PRIME MINISTER LEE IS THE BOSS AND WHILE THEY MAY ARGUE THE MERITS OF AN ISSUE WITH MFA THEY WILL FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS FAITHFULLY.

E. GOS WILL ALWAYS WEIGH CAREFULLY U.S. REPRESENTATIONS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES AND OCCASIONALLY HAS REVISED ITS POSITION AS A CONSEQUENCE. (THIS HAPPENED LAST YEAR ON GUAM/VIRGIN ISLANDS ISSUE AS RESULT OF REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY THIS EMBASSY.) AS A SUPREME REALIST, GOS HAS NO DIFFICULTY IN RECOGNIZING THAT SINGAPORE'S POSITIONS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES HAVE A SIGNIFICANT BEARING ON BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. THE GOS IS ALSO AWARE THAT ITS POSITION ON SOME OF THESE ISSUES INFLUENCES ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS ASEAN PARTNERS AS WELL AS THE ATTITUDES OF THE USSR, THE PRC AND THE GROUP OF 77 TOWARD SINGAPORE. GOS RARELY SOLICITS U.S. SUPPORT THROUGH THIS EMBASSY ON MULTILATERAL MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE OR ON ITS GENERAL APPROACH TO, AND PRIORITIES IN, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. IT WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO MAKE SUCH REPRESENTATIONS DIRECTLY TO THE U.S. DELEGATION DURING THE COURSE OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

2. ACTION REQUESTED. FOR USUN. WOULD APPRECIATE USUN'S ASSESSMENT OF ROLE OF SINGAPORE DELEGATION IN THE INITED NATIONS, ITS RESPONSIVENESS TO REPRESENTATIONS BY USUN AND WHETHER USUN OBSERVATIONS ON SINGAPORE DELEGATIONS'S PERFORMANCE GENERALLY SUPPORTS ANSWERS TO REFTEL QUESTIONSN ET FORTH ABOVE.
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